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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/042,254	01/11/2002	Michiyasu Komatsu	218075US0	6256
22850	7590	01/21/2004	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			GROUP, KARL E	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1755	

DATE MAILED: 01/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/042,254	KOMATSU ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Karl E Group	1755

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

#### A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 December 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-19 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-6 and 8-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 7, 12 and 13 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.  
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). <u>1-14-04</u> |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                 | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)                    |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>1-11-2002</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |

***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in Paper filed 12-23-03 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that it is not proposed how the silicon nitride body may be made from elemental silicon and there is no undue burden. This is not found persuasive because the claimed silicon nitride body may be made by reaction sintering elemental silicon in a nitrogen atmosphere and there is considered to be an undue burden searching a process, which does not necessarily possess the particulars of the product.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 8 and 10 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 8, the terminology "a little" is considered qualitative and not set forth the meets and bounds of the claim with any degree of particularity.

Deleting "said silicon nitride sintered body is mainly composed of silicon nitride and contains a little amount of oxygen," will overcome this rejection.

Claim 10 the limitation "metal contained as sintering agent" is considered to render the claim indefinite because claims 1 and 8 fail to define any metal in the sintering agent.

***Double Patenting***

4. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

5. Claims 1-6,8-11 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of U.S. Patent No. 6,613,443. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because a wear resistant member does not structurally define over the substrate claimed in the patent. The claims in the patent teach the instantly claimed pore size in the grain boundary and include rare earth elements, claim 4. The components in the instant dependent claims are listed in claims 8 and 9 of the patent.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

6. Claims 7,12 and 13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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US patent 6,613,443 fails to disclose or fairly suggest a bearing ball as set forth in the claims.

7. The other prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest a silicon nitride bearing member with the claimed pore size in addition to the sintering aid and oxygen amounts.

8. In an interview with Thomas Cunningham on January 14, 2004 an examiner's amendment was discussed however it was decided to issue an office action including the double patenting rejection. Applicants' representative requested changing "composed" to comprising which was agreed that such terminology further defined the claim and would be entered as an amendment.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karl E Group whose telephone number is 571-272-1368. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30-4:00) First Friday Off. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark Bell can be reached on 571-272-1362. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-1700.



Karl E Group  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1755

Keg  
1-14-04